

2-28-1888

History of the Leap Year Sleigh Ride held January 31, 1888

Phi Sigma

Arthur L. Fanning

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The Young Ladies of the Phi
Sagitta Class request the pleasure
of calling for you at 7 P.M.
on Tuesday evening Jan. 31/88.

Nothing permitting.

Supper at 10³⁰

Mary Lyman
Anna G. Belden.
Committee

R.S.V.P.
Immediately

Such was the invitation received
by all of us about Jan. 29

Upon receiving it many
of us read it a second time
then a third & finally went to
bed & dreamed of it. What
could it mean? Why was the name

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order of things to be reversed?

At last it broke upon our befogged intellects that this was the year 1888 & that when the number of a year is exactly divisible by 4 it is Leap Year.

Four goes into 1888 - 472 times
ah, there it was - 1888 is Leap Year.
the one year in every four
when the weaker & greatly to be
honored sex is allowed to
exercise the prerogatives usually
left to the other sex

Upon this great discovery
we all smiled, thought of how
we had been longing to get up
a sleighride ourselves & had
been deterred only by the fact

that Christmas had been past
but a month & that our pocket
books had not yet returned to
their usual plethoric condition.

How we were to be the
guests & they ^{to have} the pleasure of
entertaining, shall I say? no - for
they always do that - of - well
say - seeing how we enjoy
acting the host.

We all wrote our little
acceptances, some showing
their exuberance of spirit more
than others, but all saying that
"yes" we could go & all thinking
of how dreadfully glad we were
that we were going.

It would never do to show

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this latter feeling too much to
our hosts - they don't to us
you know, so to carry the
deception a little farther we
thought it best, not to be all
ready & waiting with our wraps
on when the gentle - I mean
ladies, came - that would look
too much as if we were anxious
to go & longing for their coming.

Keep them waiting for a few
minutes & let them think, how
fortunate they were, that we
would go, with them, at all.

Give them an opportunity
to look at the pictures on the walls,
study the patterns on the carpets
see how comfortable the chairs

were thinking all of the time,
that if they had known such
a pleasant opportunity for study
would be given them - they
would have worn linen dusters
in place of sealskin sagues.

They came for us on time,
that is - not over a half to three
quarters of an hour after the
time set - but that was expected
sure were therefore not disappointed.

We were glad to be assisted
down the steps, for they were slip-
pery our mothers wouldn't let
us go out a second time
with ge - that is - ladies - who let
us fall & hurt ourselves.

Then the steps of the sleigh

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were so high & hard to mount
Why didn't they think of that?
Realizing the fact however
feeling sorry for it, two of them
kindly helped each poor weak
lad-man, into the vehicle

After collecting all of the
guests, some on the West & two
on the South Side, we started
Southward.

We must I think give the
gentlemen - that is - the ladies,
Credit for looking after our
comfort during the ride.

Upon our getting in, we
carefully tucked up, our little feet
made warm, where there was robe

enough to cover them & then at intervals of two minutes, we were asked with extreme solicitude if we were quite comfortable & having a pleasant time.

They really seemed so anxious that we almost felt a little unhappy lest they should falsely imagine for an instant, that all was not bliss.

Perhaps it was ^{this} that brought forth.

Aren't we having a pleasant time?

Answer loud & deep Delightful
So glad we came,
Answer with extreme hastiness. Oh, very.

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Don't we hope we can come
again?

Answer with the whole heart.

Yes indeed!

This seemed to make the fair
ones happy & we repeated it at
judicious intervals.

On this memorable trip it
did seem as if we crossed &
uncrossed the railroad tracks a
great many times. We are
not naturally timed in matters
of this kind, but with a large
& heavy load, doubtful sleeping
over the tracks & only ladies
to push if we got aground
a train coming - it made us

doubly so. We must
say however that they did
their best to reassure us & show
by their abnormal lack of fear
that there was really no danger.
We crossed all tracks in safety.

Their extreme care & solici-
tude with which they watched
over us was further evinced
by the fact that they even
provided candy for us to suck on
seat. Possibly they thought
that if we didn't have the candy
we would suck our thumbs, but
however that was - they had
the candy. It was kind
of them to feed it to us, for fear
of our gloves getting soiled, for

a number of us, you know,
were obliged to borrow ours
we certainly would not have
been forgiven had we returned
a mixture of candy & gloves
with the candy predominating.

We must protest however
against the quality of the
stick article furnished. Not
within the speaker's knowledge
have we been guilty of supplying
such a gaudy & we fear indi-
gestible compound.

We are afraid it was cheap.

If they refute the allegation
it must be confessed that
several of us did manage
to reduce the quantity, con-

tained in the bag - bag d'ye
must - not box.

But the molasses candy?
Aye there's the rub - or rather
the stick. That was
the genuine article as was
shown by the extraordinary
amount of cohesion contain-
ed in one little bit.

It was our firm though
unexpressed belief that before
leaving their homes, they had
taken care to heat the stuff,
that it might be one solid
compact mass, & they succeeded
beyond their fondest expecta-
tions. All that was lacking
with this part of the program

was a small but strong pickaxe with each box.

The climax of the Leap Year prerogative was reached however when, while stopping on Wabash Ave. two of the — well the gentlemen for the evening went to the every other of the — well same & collected the where withal to liquidate the expenses.

Oh! how we smiled as we rattled around the keys & other trinkets (everything but money) in our pockets, to see our fair hosts with confident mien, feel first in our pocket for you know that on this evening most of them actually had three then not

finding what they expected to in that, but still looking confident, try another & find in it only a handkerchief, then turning to the publican telling her that they are sure that they brought the money & that it must be there somewhere & then what a look of triumph & "I told you so" as the searching hands brought forth the treasure. Who wouldn't

be a man & have fifteen pockets.

Once or twice during this agonizing experience some of us thought the prospect good for walking home, but we all breathed easier when the total amount was paid in & the door

went on.

Next time we will take our purses, if we have any, with us.

There was evidently not an unanimity of opinion as to how far they were to take us & how long we were to be kept out, for the question, whether we should go further or turn back, was put in true parliamentary style, our hosts all voting, but not half a dozen being aware on which side.

It was declared carried however & the driver peremptorily ordered to "drive on". He did drive on until we reached the big fountain at 35th St. James

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Boulevard where we gracefully
described the "outer edge" turned
completely around & retraced
our route, most of our hosts
still fondly supposing we were
going due south.

You remember how on
the ride homeward we grew
musical, that is we tried to sing,
our hosts kindly assisting.

The difficulty seemed to be
however that no two persons
could agree on any one tune
therefore each sang what he
pleased & the medley was truly
grand.

Our invitations had told us
that supper would be served
at 10³⁰ but when we didn't know

Possibly it was to be in the form of sandwiches served in the sleigh, or the same in a restaurant, but our hearts were made glad when we stopped in front of Miss Hume's hospitable & pleasant home & understood that our supper was to be served there.

We were carefully assisted from the sleigh our wraps being carried for us, & were welcomed to the house by Mr & Mrs Hume who made us feel at home at once. In true orthodox fashion lots were drawn for partners to supper, but in place of the gentlemen dancing

for the ladies, they drew for the gentlemen, offering us their arms, & taking us down to a most bountiful supper to which we all did justice.

It did seem queer, to say the least, to be served first, while our hosts were waiting, and then to be waited on by them, in place of our doing it. But then we would not have been surprised at any thing by this time & took it all quite as a matter of course.

Upon arising from the table we ascended to the parlors again where we were in the festive Virginia Hall.

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Old Sam Tucker.

Other things occupied our time pleasantly & it began to grow late, or rather early, but we concluded you know that it would be a salutary lesson to our hosts, to be rather late about giving the word to go home so give them an opportunity to see how much we enjoy sometimes waiting & waiting for the word.

About 130 A M however we concluded that there was no use in biting off our nose to spite our face, so asked our protectors, to please take us

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home which they obligingly
did

So ended a most delight-
ful evening we were obliged
to admit; to ourselves of course,
that we are not the only mor-
tals we can get up & put
through a sleigh ride

Arthur L. Hamming

To

DICTATED LETTER.

History of the
Leap Year
Leap Ride
Jan 31/88

A. L. Tamm
Historian

OFFICE OF

NORTON BROTHERS,

MAKERS OF

SHEET METAL PACKAGES.

36 TO 46 RIVER STREET.

Chicago, 188